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OKINAWA JULY ★ AUGUST Bulletin

THE REVIEW OF A PLACE
TACO PETES OKINAWA



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Issue 19 >> July 9, 2025



VOICE

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VOICE PAPER
features Okinawa's
local events, off-base
locations, and U.S.
military activity on the
island and across the
Asia-Pacific region.

Duty on the island

VMM-262 Conducts Joint Training with 31st Rescue Squadron



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jeremiah Barksdale)

U.S. Airman with the 31st Rescue Squadron, 18th Wing, conducts a live hoist from a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, at Kadena Air Base, June 12. The training sharpens mission skills in a joint environment and strengthens our ability to respond to regional threats.

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広告掲載のお問い合わせは voice.paper.okinawa@gmail.com



Hamahiga Island / Okinawa Memorial Day



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Jesse Davis)

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Donnie Fricks, executive officer for Headquarters Battalion, 3d Marine Division, Sgt. Yusef Johnson, imagery analysis specialist, 3d Network Battalion, Marine Corps Cyberspace Operations Group, and locals take a group photo at the Hamahiga Island memorial site on Hamahiga Island, June 23. The first memorial is dedicated to the island residents who lost their lives during the battle, while the second memorial recognizes U.S. Marine Corps Col. Kermit Shelly, who was the commanding officer of 3rd Force Service Regiment from March 1967 until his death in June 1968. Shelly had a profound impact on the restoration of the local community and his most notable efforts include the construction of an elementary school, middle school, church, community hall, multiple private residences and the island's water reservoir.

U.S. Ambassador William E. Grayson Visits U.S. Military Leaders in Japan



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Giovanni Navarrete)

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Roger B. Turner, commanding general of III Marine Expeditionary Force, speaks with U.S. Ambassador William E. Grayson, the Commissioner General at Expo 2025 Osaka, during a briefing on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, June 10. Grayson visited Okinawa to gain a better understanding of the U.S. military presence in the region and explore how the Expo can support the U.S.-Japan Alliance.

3rd MLG CG, SgtMaj Participate in Courtesy Patrol

U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Kevin Collins, right, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Logistics Group, and Sgt. Maj. Marco Cordero, the sergeant major of 3rd MLG, participate in a courtesy patrol in Naha, June 21. Increased courtesy patrols are a proactive measure to promote responsible behavior and strengthen community trust by helping prevent incidents of misconduct among service members.



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Pedro Rojas)

Local and U.S teams compete in Okinawa Dragon Boat Race



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brody Robertson)

A team of status of forces agreement personnel compete in a Dragon Boat Race in Kin Town, June 1. Over 15 Teams comprised of locals, U.S. service members and status of forces agreement personnel participated in the dragon boat race. The dragon boat race consists of three teams per match, and 11 members per team.

Joint Cleanup at Okinawa Peace Park

U.S. Army volunteers pose for a group photo after participating in a cleanup at Okinawa Peace Memorial Park, June 7. The event, held ahead of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa, brought together U.S. service members, families and local partners to promote remembrance and community connection.



(U.S. Army photo by Natalie Stanley)

JULY AUGUST bulletin

A!

YONABARU



Yonabaru Tug-of-war Festival
July 26
July 27

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大綱曳
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OKINAWA



Eisa Night 2025
August 10



NAHA



Naha Air Base Summer Festa 2025
July 18

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2025
NAHA
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Tomigusuku Harii Festival
July 20
July 21

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2025 7.20
7.21



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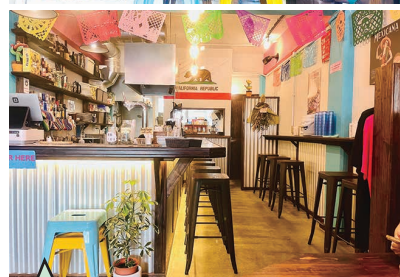


THE REVIEW

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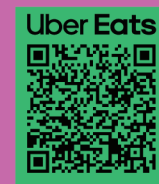
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18th MUNS Airmen save local national

Story by Staff Sgt. Gary Hilton

18th Wing Public Affairs

KADENA AIR BASE – Two U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 18th Munitions Squadron received certificates of appreciation and Wing-level acknowledgments after saving the life of an Okinawa national, June 9.

At around 2:00 p.m. on Jan. 9, 2025, Airmen 1st Class Kaden Audinet and Jacob Betancourt, both 18th MUNS storage munitions technicians, were traveling down Okinawa's Highway 74, just outside Kadena's Air Base's northern fence line.

"It was just another day," Betancourt said.

As traffic slowed, they noticed a wreckage down the road. Two vehicles had collided at a nearby intersection, causing one



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Gary Hilton)

vehicle to burst into flames.

"At first, it was very surprising," Audinet said. "You usually don't think 'oh, today there'll be a major vehicle accident and I'll have to save someone's life.'"

The burning vehicle had three passengers, two of which

U.S. Air Force Airmen 1st Class Jacob Betancourt, right, and Kaden Audinet, both 18th Munitions Squadron storage munitions technicians, answer questions during an interview with local Okinawan journalists at Nirai Fire Department Headquarters, Kadena Town, June 9.

were able to escape the wreckage. One, however, was unable to exit the vehicle. Realizing the situation, Audit and Betancourt leapt into action.

The Airmen navigated through fire and twisted metal to

(Continued on page 10)

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(Continued from page 9)

save the trapped civilian.

After moving the passenger from the wreckage, Audit and Betancourt checked all three civilians for major injuries while waiting for first responders to arrive, drawing from their previous tactical combat casualty care training sessions.

"As munitions technicians, we practice TCCC often," Audinet said. "Our job deals with various hazards, so we need to be prepared to respond swiftly to any events involving injuries."

After ensuring the civilians were okay, they also engaged in the initial fire extinguishing, and minimized the damage, borrowing fire extinguishers from the Road Station Kadena and a local food vendor located near the site.

When first responders arrived, the Airmen not only debriefed the situation, but aided in

the transfer of passengers.

Audit and Betancourt received recognition for their heroic actions from U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Brandon Wolfgang, 18th Wing command chief, during a public ceremony on March 7, 2025.

Certificates of appreciation were also awarded to both Airmen by the Kadena Town Nirai Fire Department during a ceremony at Nirai Fire Department Headquarters, Kadena Town on June 9, 2025.

"These awards demonstrate our heartfelt respect and gratitude [to

Audit and Betancourt]," Tetsuya Furumi, Nirai Fire Department fire chief said. "They carried out prompt and accurate rescue and firefighting activities during the accident."

Today, Audit and Betancourt continue their duties at the 18th Wing, ensuring the safe storage, handling and maintenance of Kadena's munitions stockpile.

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Airmen, Guardsmen and Marines train in HAZMAT response

Story & Photos by Airman 1st Class Karina Lopez
18th Wing Public Affairs



U.S. Air Force Airmen and firefighters assigned to the 18th Civil Engineer Squadron work together to zip up hazardous material suits during a joint hazardous materials recertification course at Kadena Air Base, June 18.

KADENA AIR BASE – The 18th Civil Engineer Squadron, U.S. Air National Guardsmen and U.S.

Marines conducted joint hazardous waste and emergency response training at Kadena Air Base,

June 18, to practice mitigation techniques for hazardous material emergencies.

The training included five distinct stations; each designed with specific objectives to enhance teamwork and emergency response skills. Participants collaborated to set up a hazardous material decontamination tent, identified simulated leaks in chlorine cylinders, and practiced appropriate response protocols for various chemical hazard scenarios.

“Being in the HAZMAT suit can make it hard to communicate. Sometimes it can get really foggy, and you literally can’t see,” said

(Continued on page 14)

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(Continued from page 13)

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Warren Tony, 18th CES emergency management journeyman. "Communication and staying calm are the most important factors in scenarios like this."

Simulated chemical scenarios are essential for preparing military members to respond effectively to real-world incidents where every second counts. By placing teams in high-pressure environments, these exercises reinforce the importance of effective teamwork and coordination.

To test both readiness and rapid response capabilities, the training brought together emergency management personnel, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, and the Kadena Fire Department for a unified, hands-on response effort.

"Joint training provides an opportunity for professionals from



U.S. Air National Guardsmen assigned to the 134th Air Refueling Wing, Staff Sgt. Hunter Mim, left, and Tech. Sgt. James Brannon, emergency management craftsmen, don hazardous material suits during a joint hazardous materials recertification course at Kadena Air Base, June 18.

each unit to share their expertise and demonstrate the unique capabilities their teams contribute to the mission," said U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Triston Ingwersen, 18th CES training journeyman. "Working together allows our shops to create continuity and familiarization of personnel and resources available during

emergencies."

Readiness is essential to generating credible deterrence in an increasingly complex and highly demanding security environment. The 18th Wing trains to validate shared responsibilities, tactics and systems that enable units to operate together seamlessly in the event of a real-world scenario.

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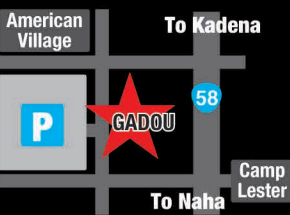
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U.S. Navy Honors 80th Anniversary of Battle of Okinawa at Candle Lighting

Story by Candice Barber
Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa

ITOMAN – U.S. Navy Sailors and family members joined local Okinawan volunteers at Peace Memorial Park on June 22 to prepare nearly 7,000 candles for a vigil on the eve of Okinawa Memorial Day. The event honored the 80th anniversary of the end of the Battle of Okinawa — an 82-day conflict in 1945 that claimed more than 200,000 lives and stands as the deadliest battle of the Pacific theater during WWII.

The annual candle lighting was organized by Bankoku-Shinryo-no-Kai, a local non-profit advocating peace to the world. Each year, the organization extends a special invitation to the U.S. Navy to take part in the event, during which volunteers transform Mabuni Hill — the site of the battle's final phase and the location of memorial walls honoring the fallen — into a solemn landscape illuminated by thousands of candles.

"I'm from Okinawa, and I've always felt it's really important to have prayers for peace," said Naoki Matsukawa, the organization's chairman. "The first purpose of this event is to commemorate those who died during the war. The second motivation is to promote peace to the world. And the third reason is to share this important message of peace to the next generation."

Commander, Fleet Activities Okinawa (CFAO) coordinated Navy participation in

the event, which brought together more than 70 Sailors from commands across the island, including U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, Patrol Squadron (VP) 9, and tenant units at White Beach Naval Facility and Kadena Air Base. One of the evening's most powerful moments came when service members and Japanese students worked together to arrange hundreds of candles into the kanji for "peace" (平和), creating a striking visual tribute.

Capt. Joseph Parsons, commanding officer of Fleet Activities Okinawa, remarked on the event. "It's pretty special that this day happens to fall on the 80th anniversary

(Continued on page 21)

Candles lit by local volunteers and U.S. Navy Sailors stationed on Okinawa spell out the Japanese symbols for "peace" during a volunteer candle lighting event at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman, June 22.

(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class MacAdam Kane Weissman)



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Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Kerisha Traille, from Farmingdale, assigned to U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, right, lights candles with her daughter Kayla Galloway, center, and husband Kimani Galloway, left, during a volunteer candle lighting event at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman, June 22.

(Continued from page 16)

of the final day of the Battle of Okinawa. This was my first time visiting since arriving on island, and it was a moving experience. It's also another incredible example of the community partnership that has grown over the past 80 years. Having local Okinawans, U.S. Navy Sailors, and their families work side by side to prepare for this commemoration is one of the most unique and meaningful parts of being stationed here. It really reflects the close relationship we

share with the local community." Following the candle setup — carried out under Okinawa's characteristic summer heat and humidity — Navy volunteers had the opportunity to visit the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum. Through powerful exhibits, photographs, and firsthand accounts from survivors, Sailors and their families gained a deeper understanding of the battle's devastating impact and the enduring commitment of the Okinawan people to peace and



U.S. Navy photos by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class MacAdam Kane Weissman

Lt. Carla Nicholas, assigned to U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, lights a candle during a volunteer candle lighting event at Peace Memorial Park in Itoman, June 22.

harmony. Alicia Hernandez, a Navy spouse, attended the event with her family. "It's an honor to bring our children so they can learn about the Battle of Okinawa. I think it's important for military families — not just to enjoy the beautiful parts of where they're stationed — but to understand its history, to dig deep, go to museums, and be there for the people. To be here and be able to light up the lanterns, it's an honor for us. That's why we're here."

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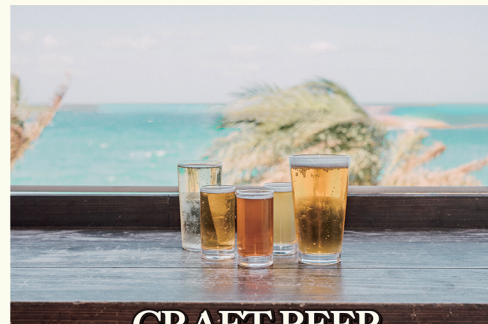
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New Leadership for USAG Okinawa

Story by Natalie Stanley
U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa

TORII STATION – U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa held a Change of Command ceremony to bid farewell to Lt. Col. Rachel Bowers and welcome Lt. Col. Elizabeth Johnson at Torii Station, June 18.

The ceremony marked the end of Bowers' two-year assignment as garrison commander. She thanked the leadership, the garrison family and the local community for their support during her time here.

"Leadership is not a solitary endeavor; it requires the support, dedication and commitment of every single member of the team," Bowers said. "To the Soldiers, civilians and family members

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Elizabeth Johnson, U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa incoming commander, delivers remarks outlining her vision and goals during the Change of Command ceremony at Torii Station, June 18.



(U.S. Army photo by Ichiro Tokashiki)

who form the backbone of this installation, you are the heart and soul of this garrison."

With new leadership in place, the garrison remains committed to supporting readiness and quality of life for the Okinawa military community.

Johnson said she is ready to serve the community, its Soldiers,

civilians and families.

"It is a privilege to command and I am excited to be here," Johnson said. "I look forward to continuing the strong service culture at USAG Okinawa, strengthening ties with our partners, and working with tenant units to advance their readiness."

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"Nābērā" refers to the luffa gourd, while "Nbushī" is a dish that falls somewhere between a stew and a soup, made by simmering tofu, vegetables, and canned pork in miso. In Okinawa, luffa gourd is a signature summer vegetable, second only to goya (bitter melon), and is primarily grown in the southern region of the island. While luffa is often associated with bath sponges in mainland Japan, in Okinawa, it is cultivated to be soft, offering a mild sweetness and a delicate, fluffy texture. Nābērā Nbushī is slow-cooked, allowing the luffa to release its natural sweet juices, enhancing its flavor. In Okinawa, luffa gourd is a familiar ingredient and is also used in miso soup and curry.

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Wellness Power Habits

Creating Maximal Healthspan and Longevity

Dr. Ceabert J. Griffith

Medical researchers and clinicians now agree that unhealthy habits lead to chronic diseases such as hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, and dementia. Conversely, healthy habits curate good health and low risk for chronic diseases. These fundamental health and wellness concepts provide the key to achieving maximal healthspan and longevity.



Developing healthy habits challenges our best efforts. Someone famous once said, “Bad habits are easy to develop and hard to live with; good habits are hard to develop and easy to live with.” What does it take to develop wellness power habits? The good news is that achieving healthy habits only requires a few new skills. To achieve optimal wellness, you only need to master a few power habits, such as health eating, daily physical activity, stress management, and social connectedness.

Habits develop when we repeat related behaviors. According to James Clear, author of the bestselling book *Atomic Habits*, a habit has four stepwise components called the *Habit Loop*: cue, craving, response, and reward. The *cue* is the trigger that causes the brain to initiate a behavior. The *craving* is the motivational force behind a behavior. The *response* is the actual behavior that you perform. Finally, the *reward* is the sought-after benefit—the release of dopamine, the so-called “feel-good” brain chemical. Creating systems/processes in your daily life that incorporate cues, cravings, behaviors, and rewards is the best way to curate power habits. Sensory cues are the most powerful in initiating the cravings for the behaviors that achieve

the rewards. For example, if you desire to exercise each morning, before going to bed, put your exercise clothes/shoes (i.e., the cue) in a prominent place so that you will see it when you wake up (i.e., the craving), to inspire you to walk (i.e., the behavior), and to gain the satisfaction of reaching your goal of walking 10,000 steps daily (i.e., the reward). Here is a prescription for creating wellness power habits.

Make a List of the Habits You Want to Change

List all the habits you want to develop and those you want to stop. Having a long list of habits to change can feel overwhelming, but the act of creating a list is powerful. Prioritize your list and identify one to three habits you plan to work on immediately.

Create a Supportive Environment

An environment facilitating visual cues to a desired habit can spur habit formation. For example, posting your wellness journey on your refrigerator can send a “wellness in progress” message and inspire your daily wellness efforts.

Start with a Small Habit and Small Steps

The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. A central

premise of habit development is that small changes—small steps—eventually accrue big results. For instance, instead of starting with the daunting goal of walking 10,000 steps a day for aerobic exercise, start small by walking 2,000 or 3,000 steps daily. You will find it easier to achieve fewer steps and feel accomplished in the short term. The quick success will inspire you to keep going and to strive to walk more steps and, eventually, 10,000 steps per day.

Grow Your New Habit in Small Ways

Aim to increase your step count by 1% each day. If you started walking 3,000 steps per day, increase your daily step count by 1%—to 3,030 steps—on the second day. By day seven, you will walk more than 3215 steps daily.

Break Your New Habit into Smaller Chunks

Once you reach a very high step count—say 5,000 steps per day—you might want to split your walking into two sessions daily—2500 steps in the morning and 2500 steps in the afternoon. This allows you to pursue two relatively easy walking sessions while accumulating a progressively higher step count by the end of each day.

Chart Your Progress

There is an old saying that *success leaves evidence*—the evidence of your success is the incremental improvements you are making. A written chart or graph of your effort is a visual depiction that can serve as a

visual cue to perpetuate the cue, craving, response, and reward *Habit Loop*.

When You Slip, Get Back on Track

Inevitably, even Olympic athletes go off track during their training. Unexpected events, like a

family medical emergency, can temporarily rob you of your habit-building momentum. The aim is to get right back on track. These temporary setbacks can teach you about your resilience. You can do it!



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Ceabert J. Griffith is trained in public health and family medicine and is an Adjunct Health Sciences professor at Touro University Worldwide. He is based in Okinawa and is the author of the recently released book “15 Power Habits of Wellness.” and co-author of “11 Power Habits to Defeat High Blood Pressure.” Both books can be purchased from Amazon.com.

VERSES FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

With The Name of The One True *G-D, The Merciful Benefactor, The Merciful Redeemer Al Kahf (The Cave)

And after the two had walked some distance, (Moses) said to his servant:

"Bring us our mid-day meal; we have indeed suffered hardship on this (day of) our journey!"

Said (the servant): "Wouldst you believe it?"

When we betook ourselves to that rock for a rest, behold, I forgot about the fish-and none but Satan made me thus forget it – and it took its way into the sea! How strange!"

(Moses) exclaimed: "That (was the sign) which we were seeking! And the two turned back, retracing their footsteps;

And found one of **OUR (Divinely Inspired) servants, on whom **WE had bestowed Grace from *Ourselves* and unto whom *WE* had imparted Knowledge (issuing) from *Our*selves.

Moses said unto him: "May I *follow* you on the understanding that you will *teach* me something of that higher Knowledge and Insight which has been given to you?"

(The wise man) answered: "Behold, you will *never* be able to have patience with me –

For how could you be patient about things that you can not comprehend within the compass of (your) knowledge and experience?"

(Moses) replied: "You will find me patient, if G-D so wills; and I shall not disobey you in anything!"

Said (the wise Sage): "Well, then, if you are to follow me, do *not* question me about anything (that I may do) until I myself give you an explanation for it."

And so the two began their journey, until (they reached the seashore; and) when they disembarked from a boat (that had carried them across), the Sage made a *hole* in it- (Whereupon Moses) exclaimed: "Have you made a hole in it in order to drown the people who may (later travel) in it? Indeed, you have done a strange thing!"

He replied: "Did I not tell you that you will never be able to have patience with me?"

Said (Moses): "Take-me not to task for my having forgotten (my promise), and be not hard on me on account of what I have done!"

[End of Part I]

*G-D instead of God. God when spelt backwards is *dog*. This is not a proper spelling for a word, that is used for The All-Mighty Creator of the Heavens and Earth.

** WE, Ourselves, US as revealed in the Qur'an is a reference to the Angels who have been assigned by The Creator to control everything in HIS creation.



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Yahya Abdullah



Translation of the
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(U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Peter Reft)

Team Misawa celebrates American Day 2025

U.S. Air Force and Navy service members participate in a parade during American Day 2025 at Misawa, Jun 15. The annual event brought together U.S. and Japanese communities to celebrate American culture and to build stronger bonds among allied defense partners.

Yokota Airmen experience JASDF BMT



(U.S. Air Force photo by Airman Kayla Karelas)

Japan Air Self-Defense Force cadets and U.S. Air Force Airmen from Yokota Air Base participate in bayonet training during a tour of Kumagaya Air Base, June 13. Yokota Airmen had the opportunity to tour JASDF Basic Military Training, which included insight into the facilities at the Basic Training Center, timed-based team race around the track, unit drills, bayonet training, and more. Exchanges, whether cultural, training, or military related, strengthens the partnership between U.S. and Japan.

USCG Cutter Stratton arrives in Japan, commences trilateral engagements with Japan Coast Guard and Philippine Coast Guard



(U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kate Kilroy)

Coast Guard leaders from the U.S., Japan, and the Philippines, as well as Japanese governmental officials attend a welcome reception in Kagoshima, June 16. Stratton is deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force. Stratton is deployed to the Indo-Pacific to advance relationships with ally and partner nations to build a more secure and prosperous region with unrestricted, lawful access to the maritime commons.

JASDF supports flight operations during RF-A 25-2



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Brosam)

A Japan Air Self-Defense Force F-15J Eagle pilot dons his oxygen mask prior to departure during Red Flag-Alaska 25-2 at Eielson Air Force, Alaska, June 17. Red Flag-Alaska provides a unique opportunity for U.S., allied and partner forces to train side by side in a realistic combat environment.

MCAS Iwakuni ARFF Multinational Crash Damaged or Disabled Aircraft Recovery training



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Dahkareo Pritchett)

U.S. Marines with Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan Air Self-Defense Force members with 5th and 6th Air Wing, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force members with Fleet Air Wing 31, Royal Airmen with Joint Aircraft Recovery Transportation Squadron, observe an F/A-18C Hornet being lowered onto a truck during Crash Damaged or Disabled Aircraft Recovery training at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, June 5. CDDAR training was held for the first time at MCAS Iwakuni by the F-35 Joint Program Office to bring multiple nations together to enhance aircraft recovery and rescue techniques and capabilities across North Atlantic Treaty Organization Allies.

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LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

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July 11th
USO Kinser Poker Tournament
USO Schwab Pool Tournament

July 17th
USO Futenma Cornhole Tournament

July 18th
USO Foster Trivia Night

July 26th
USO Hansen Saturday Game Day

For more details, please visit the Facebook page of the respective center.

USO COFFEE CONNECTIONS

USO OKINAWA COFFEE CONNECTIONS



USO Coffee Connections are gatherings happening around the world to connect military spouses with new friends or reconnect with old ones! Join USO Okinawa for Coffee Connections at the following locations:

July 17th: USO Kinser @10:30am
July 30th: USO Futenma @10:00am
Aug 11th: USO Foster @10:30am



USO.org/CoffeeConnections

SPECIAL EVENT: "Cars and Coffee" July 12th: USO Hansen @9:00am



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USO Kinser	USO Futenma	USO Foster
USO Kadena	USO Hansen	USO Schwab



Happy BIRTHDAY!

Do you have a birthday coming up? Celebrate with USO Okinawa at the following locations:

July 17th: USO Hansen
July 29th: USO Foster
July 31st: USO Schwab

For more details, please visit the Facebook page of the respective center.